

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-5, 9-11, and 19-21 are pending, Claims 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 19, and 21 having been amended, and Claims 1, 6, 7, 8, and 12-18 having been canceled by way of the present amendment. The subject matter of Claim 1 has been included in Claim 2, and the subject matter of Claim 8 has been included in Claim 9 and therefore no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action the specification was objected to; Claims 7, 11, 19, and 21 were objected to; Claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101; Claims 1, 8, and 15 were rejected as being anticipated by Kamibayashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,065,648); Claims 3-7, 10-14, and 16-18 were rejected as being unpatentable over Kamibayashi et al. in view of Akiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,805,699); and Claims 2, 9, and 19-21 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter.

In reply, the specification has been amended as requested.

Claims 11, 19, and 21 were amended to address the objections made in the outstanding Office Action.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101, each of the independent claims has been amended to include at least one element having a computer program product with instructions that when executed by a processor implement a previously claimed feature. As such it is believed that each of the pending claims complies with 35 U.S.C. § 101. However, if the Examiner disagrees the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned so that mutually agreeable claim language may be identified.

Regarding the prior art rejections, Applicants have canceled each of the independent claims and dependent claims rejected on prior art grounds, which have not been amended to depend from a superseding claim indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Consequently, in view of the indication of allowable subject matter, the cancellation of claims based on prior art rejections, and amendment to the claims consistent with 35 U.S.C. § 101, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by the presently pending claims, as amended, complies with all requirements under U.S. law for patentability. Thus, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

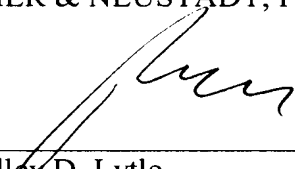
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